

# **\*\*ATTENTION\*\***

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# Support Nongame Wildlife

Personalized license plates are becoming a common sight along the highways of Washington. Besides relaying a personal message, these plates go a long way toward helping to manage this state's nongame wildlife.

The Nongame Wildlife Program, which has responsibility for more than 500 wildlife species, is funded in large part by the sale of personalized plates, along with some matching funds through the Federal Endangered Species Act. The Nongame Wildlife Program receives no funding through general tax revenues or hunting license fees.

The public can support the Nongame Wildlife Program through the purchase of personalized plates from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Plates are permanently assigned to the individual and can be transferred to another car for a nominal fee.

Bald Eagles on gravel bar	Eric Cummins
Caspian Tern #2	Fred Hosea
Harbor Seals on beach	Sue Mathews
Trumpeter Swans feeding	John Munn
Killdeer feigning broken wing	Danny On
Bald Eagle on nest with young	John Schoen

Produced by Sue Mathews for



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# ENJOY WASHINGTON'S WILDLIFE . . . .



## WITH CARE.

As more and more of us seek the outdoors of Washington, our increased activities may disturb wildlife. Research has shown that outdoor recreationists, including wildlife viewers, can have an impact on wildlife. This pamphlet is directed towards the individual recreationist, and describes how enthusiasm for wildlife can unintentionally result in severe damage to the animal being viewed. Please inform yourself and others about situations which may disturb wildlife.



## WHAT IS DISTURBANCE?

It is difficult to predict what activities may cause disturbance. At times an activity can have no effect on one animal while stressing another. It is also possible that the same activity may have a different effect depending on the time of year. However, recreational disturbance usually occurs when humans approach too closely or when habitat is destroyed.

## WAYS TO AVOID DISTURBING WILDLIFE

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### **CROWDING**



In trying to get a close look or a photograph of an animal, we are often guilty of crowding that animal, sometimes to the point of being unsafe to the viewer.

Suggestion: Use binoculars for viewing animals, and a telephoto lens for photos. Do not approach the animal, let it come to you.

### **INTERFERENCE IN BREEDING ACTIVITIES**



Disturbance during times of mating and rearing young may result in desertion and total reproductive loss. Suggestion: Restrict your and your pet's activities from known or suspected breeding and spawning areas; avoid animals with young.

### **HABITAT DESTRUCTION OR INTRUSION**



Recreational activities like camping or off-road vehicle (ORV) use, when concentrated, can destroy the vegetation or water quality. A blaring radio, tape recorder, or unmuffled engine is an unnatural noise in the wild.

Suggestion: Adopt the concept of "no trace" camping; use a headset with your radio or tape recorder; use designated ORV areas, and muffle your engine.

### **FEEDING WILD ANIMALS**



All wild animals are potentially dangerous, especially when they have lost their fear of humans because of feeding. Wild birds and small mammals may alter normal food caching behavior and migration patterns if food is artificially provided.

Suggestion: Landscape your yard with plants which attract wildlife.

# ANIMALS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO DISTURBANCE



## MARINE MAMMALS

Seals and sea lions, while mostly sea-going animals, do "haul out" on land in resting and breeding areas. If disturbed, the herd may stampede to the water causing injury to each other, or a mother may desert her young.



## NESTING BIRDS

Eggs and young birds on the nest are vulnerable to disturbance. An adult bird suddenly scared off the nest may crush the eggs or young. Uncovered eggs and young birds may suffer from overheating or cooling, starvation from missed feedings, predation, and desertion. Colonial nesting areas, such as islands where seabirds nest, should be avoided during the breeding season.

## FEEDING/ROOSTING CONGREGATIONS OF BIRDS

Washington is visited by many migratory birds during the winter which can be a stressful time of year for them.

If disturbed on their feeding grounds or roosting areas, vital energy reserves may be used up in avoiding the disturbance.



## NEWBORNS - LET THEM BE!

Adult animals may place their young in areas away from their natural predators. In most cases, a newborn has not been abandoned, and will be rejoined by its parents after all intruders have left. Report sightings of possible orphans, but do not remove them from the wild.



ACCORDING TO WASHINGTON STATE LAW (RCW 77.16.020 and 77.16.120) IT IS UNLAWFUL TO HARASS PROTECTED BIRDS, MAMMALS, REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS, AND INVERTEBRATES, OR THEIR EGGS OR NESTS. THESE LAWS ALSO APPLY TO GAME BIRDS, GAME ANIMALS, OR GAME FISH DURING CLOSED SEASONS.

## **SIGNS OF DISTURBANCE — WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

### **BIRDS:**

increased vocalization, feather ruffling, head bobbing, standing in the nest, circling over your head, dive bombing, pretending injury such as dragging a wing.



### **SEALS, SEA LIONS (on land):**

increased vocalizing, raising head up, sniffing the air, increased body movement.

### **ELK, DEER, BEARS:**

tail flicking, sniffing the air, foot stomping, grinding teeth, snorting.

